

State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

1900 Williams Street - P.O. Box 4789

Helena, MT 59604-4789

Telephone: (406) 841-3911 Fax: (406) 841-3966

Situation Report for August 31, 2007

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



2007 FIRES

Report Includes:

- Background Information
 - Fire Restrictions & Closures
 - Air Quality
 - Road Closures/Travel Restrictions
- Current Incident Situation
- New Large Fires
- Weather
- State Declarations
- Local & Tribal Declarations
- Local Government & Tribal Emergency Operations
- Requests for State Financial Assistance
 - Fire Management Assistance Grants
 - EMAC Resources Committed
 - Summary of State Resources Committed

Important Websites:

State of Montana Fire Information:

<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center

http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

Northern Rockies Coordination Center

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

Inciweb -- Incident Information System

<http://www.inciweb.org/state/27/>

Being prepared: Ready.gov

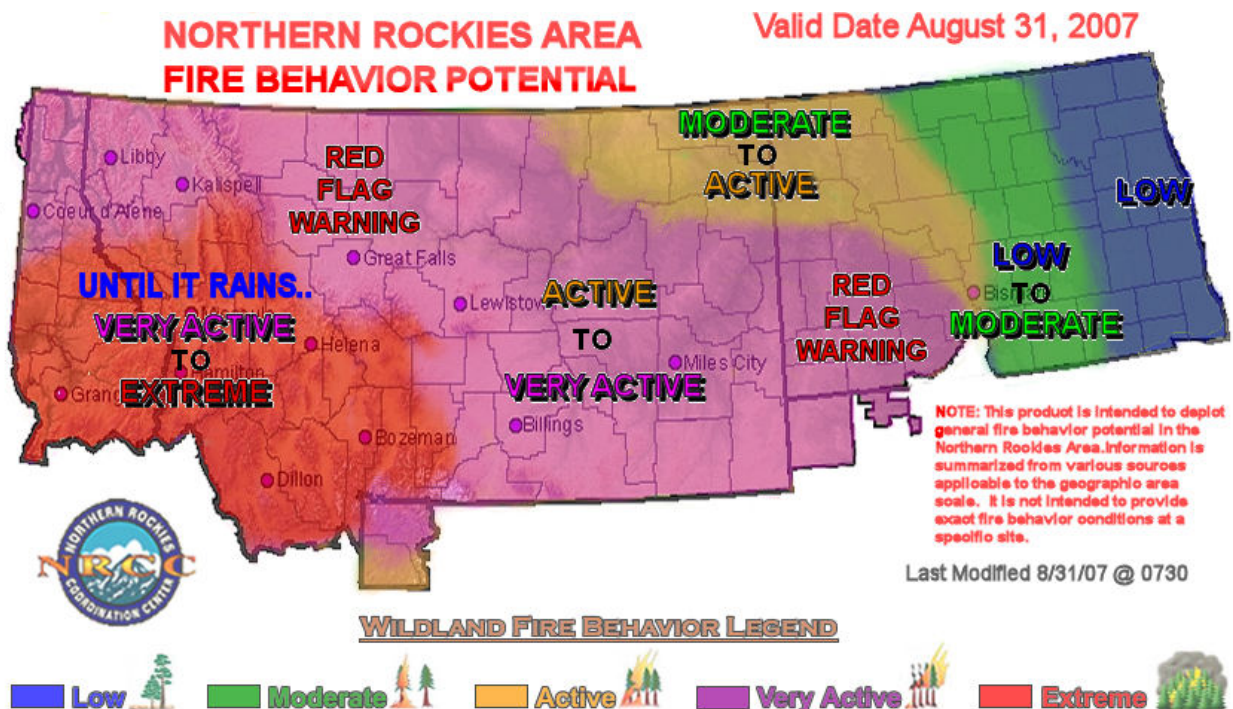
I. Background Information

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system tends to mitigate most of the moisture received.

Long Range Predictions

Above normal significant fire potential has been forecasted for most of the Area during August. Fuel moisture conditions are expected to improve during the September through November time period except for eastern Montana. In many areas across western Montana and northern Idaho, downed dead woody fuel moistures are drier than normal and Energy Release Component indices are running near or above record levels

and well ahead of normal for this time of year. The Climate Prediction Center's forecast for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation during August, especially over western portions of the Area... has proven to be true. Wind events were frequent during August as well. Abundant fine fuels have cured rapidly in eastern Montana and increased the probability for large fire problems during August and into the fall months.



Fire Contracting: Inquiries regarding contracting fire equipment and other fire resources should be directed to the interested party's local dispatch center or Geographic Area Coordination Center see:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/agree-contract/signup.html>

Fire Restrictions & Closures: Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagel.pdf>

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagell.pdf>

Fire Restrictions in Effect (for specific areas):

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

Air Quality & Smoke: The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

Road Closures & Travel Restrictions:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Emergency Rules:

<http://sos.mt.gov/ARM/emergency/index.asp>

Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

[Current Fire Restrictions](#)

[Drought & Fire Updates](#)

[Drought & Fire News](#)

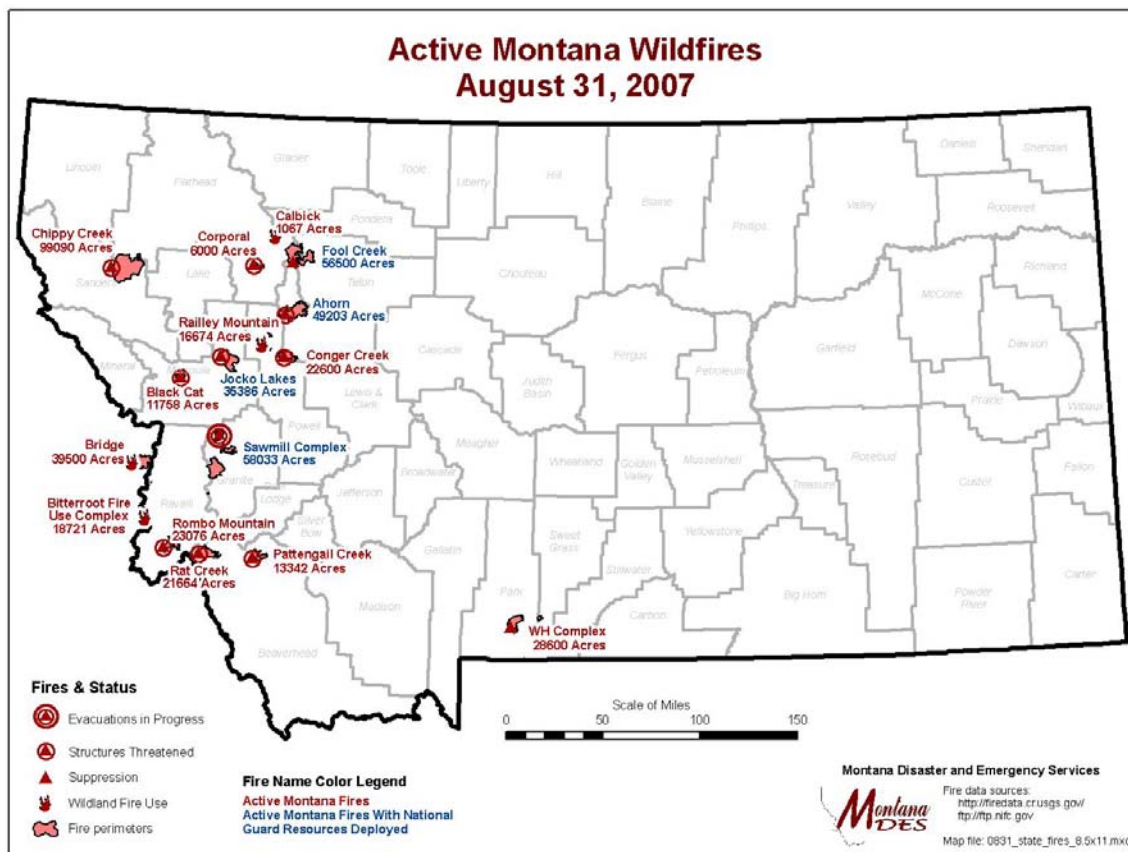
Department of Revenue

<http://mt.gov/revenue/forindividuals/taxrelieffordisaster.asp>

Department of Agriculture

<http://agr.mt.gov/crops/hayFirst.asp>

II. Current Incident Situation - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority. (This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment.) The following URL is a link to maps of fire perimeters for the several of the incidents: http://dma.mt.gov/des/Fire_Perimeter_Maps.asp.



Currently assigned to Montana incidents are:

Type 1 IMT's	-	2
Type 2 IMT's	-	2
Fire Use Management Teams	-	3

Throughout the week, many of the large wildland fire incidents in the Northern Rockies Geographic Area are transitioning from Type I or II incidents to Type III organizations.

Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 5

National Preparedness Level = 4

Sawmill Complex (4 fires) is located on the Lolo, Bitterroot and Beaverhead – Deerlodge National Forests. The four fires in this complex extend from approximately 22 miles SE of Missoula to an area approximately 23 miles WSW of Phillipsburg, MT. The complex acreage is 58,033 and includes the Sawmill Creek, Wyman #2, Fisher Point, and the Signal Rock 07 fires. Containment is 22%. Angell's Type 2 IMT is in command. Personnel assigned: 617. Numerous residences and other structures remain threatened. Use Restrictions and Road Closures are in effect within the Rock Creek drainage. Evacuations are in effect along the Willow Cr Road.

Jocko Lakes started on CSKT lands (Flathead Agency, BIA), twenty-six miles NE of Missoula; 8 miles W of Seeley Lake. Hoff's Type 1 IMT is assigned. The Jocko Lakes Fire is 35,386 acres and 57% contained. Personnel assigned: 847. Residences and commercial properties remain threatened. Structures (8) have been lost, including 1 primary residence and 7 outbuildings.

Rombo Mountain is located in the Bitterroot NF. The fire is located eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT is assigned (also managing Rat Creek and Pattengail Creek). Estimated size is 23,076 acres with 15% containment. Personnel assigned: 243. Residences, Painted Rocks State Park and other commercial property remain threatened. **Highway 93 and West Fork Road are open.** Existing Stage I Pre-Evacuation Notices/Alerts remain in effect. Also, the existing area closure order remains in effect.

BH Fire is 36 miles southwest of Darby. Perkin's FUMT is managing the BH Fire (under the umbrella of the Bitterroot WFU Complex). The fire is 708 acres with no report on containment. Personnel assigned: 0. Cause: Lightning. Intermittent closure of Magruder Corridor Road due to fire activity.

Bitterroot Fire Use Complex (12 fires) is 15 air miles west of Darby. Perkins's FUMT is assigned. The Bitterroot Fire Use Complex is 18,721 acres. Personnel assigned: 46. Cause: Lightning. Structures are threatened. One structure was destroyed. Magruder Corridor Road is intermittently closed.

Ahorn Fire on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is being managed by Lineback's FUMT (also managing the Fool Creek Fire). Current size is estimated at 49,203 acres and is 20% contained. Personnel Assigned: 187.

Evacuations are in effect. Structure protection for residences and guest ranches in the Benchmark, Gibson, and Sun River Canyon areas continue.

Fool Creek on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests, approximately 30 miles NW of Choteau. Fire is now 56,500 acres with 20% containment. Personnel assigned: 148. Lineback's FUMT is assigned (also managing the Ahorn Fire). Several outbuildings, including a ski resort remain threaten (7 outbuildings have burned).

Chippy Creek is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, and 24 miles N of Thompson Falls, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Secrest's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Size is 99,090 acres with 87% containment. Personnel assigned: 639. Numerous homes remain threatened. The Hubbard dam road remains closed to the general public, because of fire traffic.

Black Cat is located between Highway 93 and Mill Creek, approximately 2 miles SW of Evaro, Montana. Berger's Type 3 organization is assigned. Current size is 11,758 acres with 95% containment. Approximately 307 personnel are assigned. A total of seven (7) unoccupied structures were lost, but no primary residences were reported as destroyed. Highway 93 is opened.

Rat Creek is located on the Beaverhead/Deerlodge NF, twenty-five miles west of Wisdom, MT. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT (also managing the Rombo Mountain Fire and Pattengail Creek) is assigned. The fire is now 21,664 acres with 15% containment. Personnel assigned: 244. Structures are threatened.

Pattengail Creek on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF, 10 miles northeast of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is 13,342 acres and 15% contained. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT (also managing the Rombo Mountain and Rat Creek Fires) is assigned; with 7 personnel. 12 structures along Highway 43 (west side of the fire in the area of Doolittle Creek and Squaw Creek) are threatened.

Conger Creek is on the Lolo National Forest, approximately 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is now 20,600 acres, with no report on containment. Seielstad (Type 3 IC) is assigned with 18 personnel. 13 outbuildings are threatened.

WH Complex – These fires are located 27 miles S of Livingston, and 10 miles SE of Emigrant, MT. Total size of the complex is 28,600 acres with 70% containment. Bonefeld's FUMT is assigned; a Type 3 organization will assume command of the incident tonight at 2000 hours. Personnel Assigned: 130.

Calbick is located on the Flathead National Forest, approximately 20 miles South of East Glacier, MT. FNF Duty Officer is assigned. Personnel assigned: 6. Cause: Lightning. The Fire is approximately 1,067 acres in size, with no report on containment. No structures are currently threatened, but structure protection measures (for 10 outbuildings) are continuing in the Schafer Meadows area.

Railley Mountain on the Flathead NF is 15 miles northeast of Seeley Lake. (This fire was previously reported as a confined/contained incident.) Carbonari is assigned as the

FUM1. The Railley Mountain Fire is 16,674 acres with no report on containment. Personnel assigned: 6. Seven (7) outbuildings are threatened. Cause: Lightning.

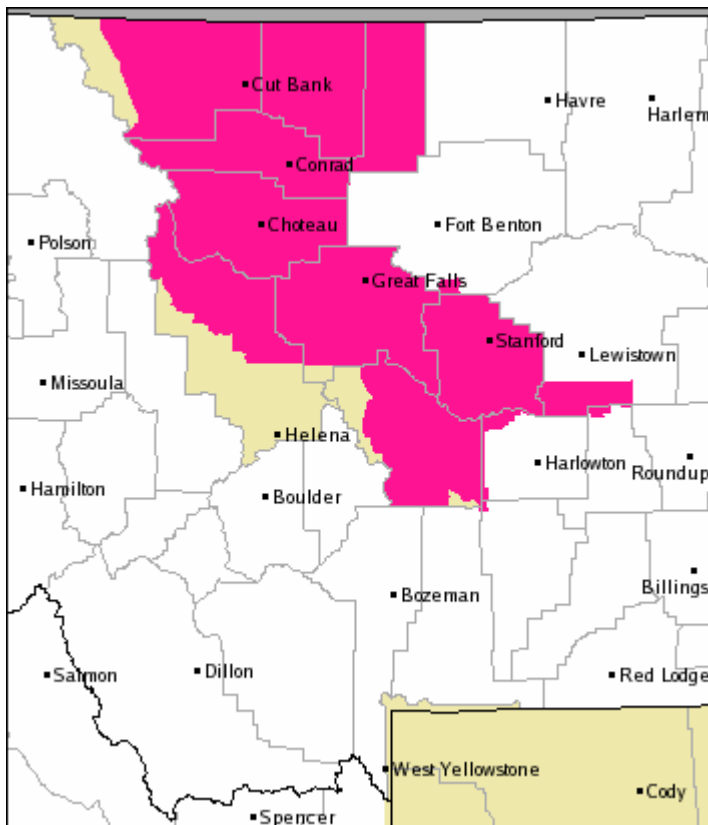
Corporal Fire is 18 miles east of Swan Lake on the Flathead NF. The Corporal Fire is 6,000 acres with no report on containment. Oliver (Type 3 IC) is assigned. Personnel assigned: 35. Cause: Lightning. Structures at Spotted Bear are threatened.

Turtlehead WFU is 30 miles north northeast of Condon. The Turtlehead WFU Fire is 1,310 acres. FNF Duty Officer is assigned. No personnel are assigned. The Turtlehead WFU Fire is in monitor status.

Skyland is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. Stanley's Type 3 organization is assigned. The Skyland Fire is 45,760 acres with 75% containment. Personnel assigned: 258. Two structures are confirmed lost.

** There were no NEW LARGE FIRES (or emerging Extended Attack Fires over 100 acres in size) reported in Montana yesterday.*

III. Weather - Red Flag Warnings and/or Fire Weather Watches



Red Flag Warning today!

The National Weather Service in Missoula has issued a Red Flag Warning... in effect from noon MDT today to midnight tonight. The Red Flag Warning is for gusty winds and low humidities.

Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:

A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours.

<http://www.weather.gov/>

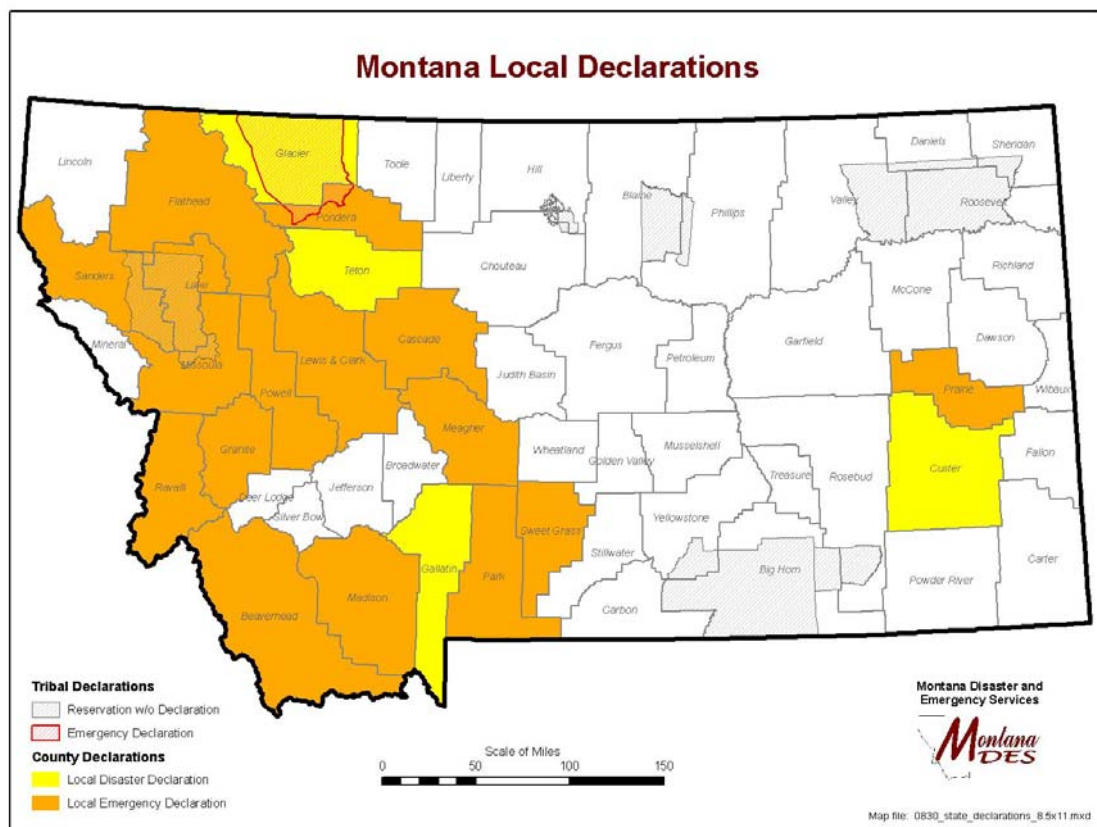
Weather Forecast For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf

Fire Behavior Forecast For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see:
http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf

IV. **State Declarations**

- Statewide Disaster Declaration (effective 8/25/07) due to continuing Wildland Fires.

V. **Local and Tribal Declarations**



- **State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark
Lake
Cascade
Flathead
Prairie
Pondera
Sweet Grass
Madison
Powell

Ravalli
Granite
Missoula
Sanders
Beaverhead
Blackfoot Nation
Park
Meagher

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton
Glacier

Gallatin
Custer

VI. Jurisdictional Emergency Operations

No local government or tribal government EOC's are open.

VI. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Fire Management Assistance Grants

- Jocko Lakes FEMA-2718FM-MT approved 8/4/07
- Black Cat FEMA-2721FM-MT approved 8/16/07
- Ford Road FEMA-2723FM-MT approved 8/19/07

IX. Emergency Management Assistance Compact Resources Committed

- EMAC A-Team is assigned to the MT State Emergency Coordination Center.
- Two HEMTT aviation refuelers from Colorado National Guard are deployed to support the Montana Army National Guard. The HEMTT's are scheduled for demobilization and return to Colorado on 9/4.

X. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- Montana National Guard Security Teams are currently assigned to:
 - Ahorn Fire
 - Sawmill Complex (2 teams)
 - Jocko Lake
 - Fool Creek Fire
- Montana Highway Patrol resources are assigned (as requested) to assist in traffic control and law enforcement support of large fires.
- The SECC is currently staffed and activated to a Level III status with extended hours, seven days a week. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.
- **Effective 8/31/07 at close of business the SECC will return to a Level II status with limited staffing to support the remaining National Guard resources that are deployed, unless there are significant developments in the wildfire situation in Montana.**